



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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August 22, 2005

Chief looks to make AETC 'command of choice'

By Robert F. Dorr

When he became commander of Air Education and Training Command on June 23, Gen. William R. Looney III inherited a huge organization with responsibilities that seem to be pulled from today's headlines.

Under Looney, AETC will recruit, train and educate everyone in the Air Force.

It's a "healthy, vibrant and active command," Looney said in an Aug. 5 interview.

With 41,706 military personnel, 15,578 civilians and 1,737 aircraft at 13 bases, AETC is the second-largest formation in the Air Force. Only Air Combat Command is larger.

How important is AETC's mission?

"Somewhere out there today, someone raising their hand and joining our Air Force will be the chief master sergeant of the Air Force 30 years from now," Looney said. "Someone [now training in AETC] will be the chief of staff of the Air Force. We may have a chairman [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] out there who is instructing at one of our bases right now who will be the chairman in the next 20 to 25 years."

Looney paused and added, "This command is all about tomorrow."

At the moment, you might not be thinking about training or education. Recently, I've heard from an airman who turns wrenches in South Korea, a tactical airlift pilot who flies into hot spots in Iraq and a security forces noncommissioned officer on the U.S. East Coast. All are doing what Looney calls "executing the mission." None is giving much thought, for now, to learning or teaching.

But if you're not in AETC now, you'll get there.

"Everybody in the Air Force should appreciate that at some time in their career, they'll be called upon to become an instructor," Looney said.

We were talking about instructor pilots, but Looney clearly also was thinking about those who teach everything from jet engine maintenance to leadership.

Instructing can be more challenging than other duties, Looney said.

"You'll get a lot more responsibility at a much lower rank as an instructor in this command," he said. "You get the chance for more opportunity, more responsibility."

Looney didn't say this, but it's no secret that AETC and its pre-1993 predecessor Air Training Command were long regarded as a backwater, an inconvenient detour for anyone motivated to be at the center of the action.

It doesn't seem that way any longer. Years ago, AETC acquired the training function for the operational aircraft that carry out the Air Force's mission. So if you're going to maintain, crew or pilot almost anything in the inventory,

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from the F/A-22 Raptor to the HH-60G Pave Hawk, you're going to learn your job at an AETC base — and, later in your career, you'll come back to teach your job.

"My goal," Looney said, "is to make AETC a 'command of choice,' a place where all look forward to serving."

And, no, that doesn't mean AETC will become a parking ground. Looney wants talented leaders to drop in, and drop out, of his command. While they're assigned to AETC, most can expect a breather from the pressures of constant deployment (and from a war in Iraq that seems to have no foreseeable end).

"The lifestyle is a little more stable here, even though we do deploy," Looney said.

If you expect to be offered an opportunity to serve in a training or education slot and haven't given it enough thought, I would join Looney in urging you to consider his command. Few experiences are more rewarding than influencing the lives of others.

In our telephone interview, Looney exuded the squeaky-clean enthusiasm and corporate blandness that is so often the first impression made by our leaders today.

Responding to the oft-uttered charge that fighter pilots run today's Air Force, Looney said his command is making full use of leaders with airlift, bomber and helicopter experience. I believe he intended that characterization to include navigators, battle managers, nonrated officers and noncommissioned officers. I didn't ask when a skilled leader from one of these communities might aspire to F-15 Eagle pilot Looney's job.

The writer, an Air Force veteran, lives in Oakton, Va. He is the author of books on military topics, including "Chopper," a history of helicopter pilots. His e-mail address is robert.f.dorr@cox.net.

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Instructor pilot charged in CAFB cheating scandal gets hearing

Dispatch Staff Report

A pilot instructor charged with heading a cheating scandal at Columbus Air Force Base last year waived his right to an Article 32 hearing this morning and faces court martial.

Capt. Richard Brimer of the 41st Flying Training Squadron faces charges of failure to obey a lawful regulation, making a false official statement and conduct unbecoming an officer by distributing controlled test answers.

An Article 32 hearing, the military equivalent of a civilian grand jury hearing, inquires into the truth to make a recommendation regarding the charges. But Brimer waived the hearing and the commander of the 14th Military Flying Wing accepted the decision, base officials said.

The Air Force will proceed with court martial although a final decision on the actual

charges still is being negotiated, according to Sonic Johnson, chief of public affairs at CAFB.

"They (Brimer) obviously felt the Air Force case was strong," Johnson said following today's proceedings at the base. The decision that remains to be made is the exact nature of the charges but the Air Force will proceed with court martial."

Brimer is charged in connection with a scandal last year in which 11 officers in the T-37 Tweet phase of specialized undergraduate pilot training were accused of cheating on emergency procedures quizzes that are a small but important part of pilot training.

Brimer was the pilots' instructor.

The 11 pilots, who ranged in rank from second lieutenant to captain, received non-judicial punishments including forfeitures of pay ranging from \$250 to

"That's where you earn your money. Anyone can get in an airplane and fly it. When things go wrong, that's when they separate the men from the boys, if you will."

Sonic Johnson
CAFB chief of public affairs

\$1,675 per month for two months and reprimands for unacceptable conduct offenses including conduct unbecoming an officer (cheating on academic tests), dereliction of duty and making a false official statement.

Most had their pay docked \$250-\$500 a month but one had \$1,675 a month — about half a month's pay for a lieutenant — deducted, officials said.

The investigation into the cheating started late last year

when base officials were alerted to the fact the officers may have been given answers to at least one and possibly more of the tests. Members of a new class alerted base personnel to the incidents.

Johnson, a former instructor at the base, said pilots need to know emergency procedures "off the top of their head" for when they fly solo. "Not knowing them, they may not be able to properly recover an aircraft in an emergency situation," he said.

The students were in the five-month, second phase of pilot training on the T-37 when the cheating occurred, Johnson said.



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Three of the students did not progress from that phase, but the eight others were able progress to the third and last phase of training on either the T-1 Jayhawk or the T-38 Talon. Those who train on the T-1 will usually fly tanker and transport aircraft while those who train on the T-38 become fighter or bomber pilots.

Brimer also is now working a desk job.

"At the Article 32 hearing, we hope to present evidence that establishes that this should not be in a court-martial," Frank Spinner, his civilian attorney, said previously.

The weekly emergency procedures quizzes consist of 20 questions with a passing score of 85 percent. Failing scores ground a student pilot until he passes a retest.

The normal attrition rate for pilot training is approximately 12 percent, according to Johnson. During this period, two students who did not cheat were eliminated for academic deficiency after failing syllabus-directed academ-

ic tests three times.

Military officials say emergency procedures training is one of the most important aspects of pilot training, and paramount if pilots decide to go into commercial aviation.

"That's where you earn your money," Johnson said. "Anyone can get in an airplane and fly it. When things go wrong, that's when they separate the men from the boys, if you will."

After the cheating incidents came to light, CAFB changed some test procedures immediately, including how the questions are asked and the level of supervision provided during testing. Air Education and Training Command made more wide-ranging changes to testing procedures and databases as a result of the cheating, Johnson said.

"You don't know — how big was the iceberg?" he said. "They took a bunch of precautions so that if you have answers, they're no good."

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Truck unit going to Iraq

It will haul food, fuel, and they won't stop for anything
By MICHAEL NEWSOM

BILOXI - Driving a tractor trailer on the makeshift roads of Iraq is a hot and dangerous enterprise, but members of the 81st Transportation Squadron based at Keesler Air Force Base say they're ready. The 15-member truck driving unit will be deployed within the coming weeks to haul cargo like food and fuel with civilians in the sandstorms, which wreak havoc on the seals, gaskets and air filters of the Cummins-powered Freightliner trucks they drive.

The armored trucks will not give an inch to vehicles that block the road because of the possibility of insurgents using a car bomb or an improvised explosive device attack.

"Whether they like it or not, they will move," said Senior Airman Max Gonzalez.

Gonzalez said the group has orders to stop for almost nothing, even bathroom breaks, on each trip. The only time the crews will be slowed down is to dodge massive craters in the road or to have new sections of roads made around impassible parts that were destroyed by bombs. One caveat in the orders says the group can stop at Army camps along the delivery routes.

Gonzalez said the trucks do not have sleepers, but otherwise look like a standard tractor trailer. He said the rigs can "turn on a dime." The transportation squadron has mechanics in the unit to handle any repairs that might slow them down.

Gonzalez said the spouses of those deployed will be taken care of through programs Keesler has in place for them. Base representatives will visit them and see if they need chores done, and make arrangements for the work, he said.

The deployment could last up to eight months, so on Thursday at Keesler the drivers had a family day to spend time with their loved ones before they leave.

Crystal Jacquez sat with her new husband, Manuel Jacquez, airman first class, lingering long after the other relatives left the cookout, and the couple was perched on a sofa with other truck-driving airmen. The two married six months ago.

"Well, we separated for two months (during his training), now we are separating for eight months. I am going to try to stay busy," she said.

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